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The
POLITICAL OPINIONS
of
THOMAS JEFFERSON

JOHN WALTER WAYLAND

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Th. Jefferson



THE
POLITICAL OPINIONS
OF
THOMAS JEFFERSON

AN ESSAY BY

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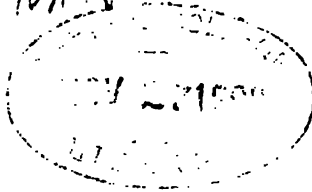
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INTRODUCTION

So vast is the deluge of printer's ink now flooding the world that the question may well be asked: Why print another book about Jefferson? Are not his own works in print? And have not numerous biographers written accounts of his life and opinions? True enough. Yet where are we to find a book in which the quintessence of Jefferson's political views is given in clear and readable style, yet sufficiently brief to find readers among the busy, rushing people of to-day? Dr. Wayland's "Essay" is just such a book, and I should be glad, indeed, if any commendation of mine could increase the circulation of the work.

Neither the author of this essay nor the individual who has the honor of composing the Introduction regards Thomas Jefferson as infallible. There were inconsistencies in both his words and his deeds. He did not always live up to his ideals. These ideals, none the less, were noble, and are well worthy of being held


aloft before a generation in whose eyes both personal and constitutional liberty seem of trivial worth when compared with ephemeral fads or with heaps of gold.

Hamilton thought the average citizen unfit for self-government, and fit only to be controlled by such sages as himself. Jefferson, on the other hand, considered the average citizen able to manage his own personal affairs better than either kings, statesmen, or majorities could manage them for him. I say, of managing *his own* affairs—a very different thing from managing the affairs of others. For Jefferson did not believe even a hundred million average men capable of managing the personal affairs of others as well as these could do it themselves. It is true that he considered acquiescence in the decisions of the majority to be the duty of the citizen. Yet surely the author of the Declaration of Independence did not mean by this that the minority must be as sheep when the majority act as wolves. So long as the majority act within the limits of the law, so long should the minority submit. But such is not necessarily the case when government (in the hands of either autocratic czar or popular

Hamilton

majority) passes wholly beyond its legitimate sphere. But what is that legitimate sphere? Simply this, in Jefferson's view: "to restrain men from injuring one another," while leaving them "otherwise free." Thomas Jefferson believed firmly in majority rule, under strict constitutional limitation. Yet he would probably now agree with Herbert Spencer that, while the divine right of kings was the great political superstition of the past, the great political superstition of the present is the divine right of majorities.

Egotists like Hamilton, Jackson, or Roosevelt think government a good thing in itself, and do not think there can possibly be too much of so good a thing, provided they themselves may dispense it to the multitude. Such men enjoy dominion over others, and believe in government for its own sake. Jefferson believed in liberty; regarding government as merely a disagreeable though necessary means to the great end of preserving the liberty of the weak against the despotism of the strong. There is no more brutal tyrant than a wrong-headed majority; and history shows that majorities, when trusted with unlimited power, are very



apt to be wrong-headed. If monarchy should be limited, so also should democracy; and the supreme merit of the United States Constitution is that it everywhere—so far as ink and parchment can do so—puts strict limitations upon the absolute domination of numbers. Having jumped from the frying-pan of monarchy, the men who drew up that great document were not silly enough to leap into the fire of unlimited democracy. To-day, on the contrary, a different spirit is rife. For millions think it right to dictate, by a mere count of noses, in town, county, or State, whether grown men shall be permitted to play whist, or drink beer, or smoke cigarettes. Worse still, they sit drinking in with eager ears the perennial maunderings of Bryan, or gazing rapturously at Roosevelt's massive club and spectacular teeth.

Yet each of these men prescribes the same remedy for all earthly ills—government, more government, and more government still. Jefferson, on the other hand, believed in liberty, more liberty, and more liberty still. Had a man who loved freedom less written the epitaph upon his tomb, he would doubtless have mentioned

the high offices that he held—would have gloried in the fact that he exercised power and dominion over man. Yet that epitaph, written by himself, wholly ignores the facts that he was Governor of Virginia, Plenipotentiary to France, Secretary of State in Washington's Cabinet, Vice-President and President of the United States. It does not even mention that by the purchase of Louisiana for a song he added an empire to that domain over which he had been chosen to rule. Three things, however, and three things only, did Jefferson mention in that epitaph. All three promoted liberty. The first was the Declaration of Independence. The second was the statute establishing religious freedom in Virginia. The third was the fact that he was the Father of the University of Virginia, the object of which, again, was to make men free—free from the bondage of ignorance. A trinity of deeds. A unity of purpose.

Such being his love of liberty, one might ask whether Jefferson's political creed can properly be called "democracy," in the strict sense of the word, the domination of the populace, the despotism of

the majority. If we could tolerate such a hybrid word as "minimocracy" (we should flee aghast from such a monster as "microtatocracy"), and if "minimocracy" meant the political system in which there was a minimum of government and a maximum of freedom, then the term would convey a more accurate conception of Jefferson's creed than "democracy." For, while Jefferson was not foolish enough to believe, with the dreamy, theoretical anarchists, that government can ever be permanently abolished, he did believe that the ideal state is that in which individual liberty has reached the zenith, and governmental force the nadir.

But enough. Let the Sage of Monticello speak for himself, in sayings selected in the calm, judicial spirit which Dr. Wayland displays in everything that he says, writes, or does. Dr. Wayland is not responsible for the opinions expressed in this Introduction, but I will state, in conclusion, that he has been associated with me—as student in my classes, as assistant, and as friend—for a number of years, and that I take a natural pride in his work.

R. H. DABNEY.

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA, 23 July, 1907.



PREFATORY REMARKS

IN spite of the recent decision by the electors of the Hall of Fame, it is probable that no American statesman, unless it be Washington, holds a more assured place in American history than Thomas Jefferson. If the authorship of the Declaration of Independence were his sole title to permanent recognition, his pre-eminence could not be denied so long as the United States is a nation, or so long as the principles of national life embodied in that superb document are dear to humanity. But notwithstanding this fact, and the fact that he has other claims equally great upon the perpetual memory of our people, it is often surprising to observe how little is really understood concerning his actual place in our political organism. Most persons have at least a vague idea of what Jefferson stood for, but perhaps few only could give an intelligent and definite outline of his opinions and principles. This is true not only in the more remote parts of our country,

or in districts where party antagonism may to some extent have blinded the public eye to his claims upon posterity, but it is true also in too great a measure even in his own native State, and among persons that continually refer to him with the utmost deference.

In the following essay no claim is made to a complete enumeration of Jefferson's political principles and opinions; and those enumerated are not treated exhaustively. Completeness and thoroughness can hardly be expected in so brief a study, when bulky volumes have been written without attaining these results. Nevertheless, it is hoped that a comprehensive outline is here given; that only is attempted; and it is also believed that nothing of great importance has been left wholly untouched.

Two separate statements of Jefferson's platform of principles, as declared by himself, once in a letter to Elbridge Gerry, January 26, 1799, and again in his first inaugural address, have been carefully studied, together with many other related statements found in various portions of his writings. His views on many questions are quoted directly, others are

given indirectly. If some erroneous opinions are occasionally expressed, or some false inferences drawn, they must be charged, not to Mr. Jefferson,¹ but to the writer, unless someone else is in some way made responsible for them; and if other views that are not essentially erroneous are perchance too broadly expressed, let it be remembered that in a brief treatise, such as this is intended to be, it is not always possible to intrench every assertion with its attendant qualifications.

The classification attempted of Mr. Jefferson's opinions may be subject to some criticism, since political, economic, and social questions are treated rather indiscriminately. For disregarding these distinctions in the partition and discussion of the subject, I have only, as an excuse, the plea that in real life, social, economic, and political problems are inseparably blended. Further criticism may be elicited by the fact that some questions that might have been discussed under the particular divisions have been reserved for the general head. For this offense—

¹ By this I do not mean to imply that Mr. Jefferson was infallible, but that in the interpretation of his opinions I may sometimes be in error.

if it be one—I can only claim the decision of personal taste and judgment.

The edition of Jefferson's Works referred to in the foot-notes is that by H. A. Washington, in nine volumes. Other sources frequently consulted are the *Statesman's Manual* and *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*. The life of Jefferson most freely quoted from is Randall's, in three volumes. J. W. W.

THE POLITICAL OPINIONS
OF
THOMAS JEFFERSON

I
CONCERNING GOVERNMENT

A. ITS PURPOSE

WAIVING for the moment a definition of government, let us see what, in Mr. Jefferson's opinion, is its purpose.

Near the beginning of that instrument by which he is best known, a number of assertions are made which are assumed to embody self-evident truths. Among these assertions are the following: "That men are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness"; and "that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men." This is a statement so clear and direct as to need no comment; and that it is generally accepted as true, we can scarcely

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doubt. An expression, in more amplified form, of the sentence just quoted, but not otherwise differing from it, is found in Mr. Jefferson's first inaugural address, delivered March 4, 1801, a quarter of a century after the Declaration of Independence was formulated. After enumerating some of the advantages enjoyed by Americans, owing to their geographical position, the boundless resources of their country, a due sense of their equal right, etc., "What more is necessary," he asks, "to make us a happy and prosperous people? Still one thing more, fellow-citizens," he continues—"a wise and frugal government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, which shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned." This is the sum of good government, and this is necessary to close the circle of our felicities."

B. THE CITIZEN'S RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES

These have already been asserted in more or less general terms. The right of life is first. Liberty is also esteemed in-

alienable.¹ Liberty in religion and liberty of person are specifically insisted upon. In the first inaugural address "freedom of religion" is mentioned as an "essential principle"; in the letter to Elbridge Gerry² is made the declaration, "I am for freedom of religion, and against all maneuvers to bring about a legal ascendency of one sect over another"; and all men that visit the patriot's tomb are reminded that he was the "author . . . of the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom."

Mr. Jefferson insisted upon liberty of person no less strongly. He demanded "freedom of person under the protection of the habeas corpus."³ This was one of the privileges guaranteed by the Constitution,⁴ to be suspended only under extreme conditions. In 1798 had been passed the Alien and Sedition Acts, which were regarded by many as an unwarranted infringement of this principle and others. Virginia and Kentucky had

¹ Slaves were not considered citizens, and hence not entitled to liberty. In fact, they could not have been regarded even as men, since men were entitled to liberty.

² Jefferson's *Complete Works*, vol. iv, p. 266.

³ First Inaugural.

⁴ Art, i, sec. ix, 2.

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passed resolutions of remonstrance and nullification, those of Kentucky being originally drafted by Jefferson himself;⁵ and it may be that the fresh remembrance of what he had regarded as so gross a violation of guaranteed rights by his predecessor in office, caused him now to reassert these rights the more vehemently.

No one is to be denied the "pursuit of happiness." Here we have also a general expression of principle, but under it also we may find some special provisions. Of course, Mr. Jefferson recognized the right to acquire and possess property. His language already quoted advocates a government that "shall leave men free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned." The right of suffrage was one accorded by the Constitution to all United States citizens, and was a right that Mr. Jefferson would have been the last to take away—he who had "a jealous care of the right of election by the people";⁶ and in order that these several rights of life, of person, of property, of privilege, should

⁵ *Works*, vol. vii, p. 229.

⁶ First Inaugural.

not be unjustly abridged, he was careful to insist upon another specific right—the right of “trial by juries impartially selected.”⁷

C. THE CITIZEN'S DUTIES

In return for the “liberty of the law,” the citizen must impose upon himself self-restraint. In giving all men religious freedom, it is assumed that their religion, though “professed, indeed, and practiced in various forms, yet in all of them includes honesty, truth, temperance, gratitude, and the love of man.” The true citizen must pay his debts, respect the rights of others, discharge his civil obligations, and strive always to be worthy of such a government as he would desire to have over him—in short, he must be a “man.”

There is yet another duty to be exacted of the loyal citizen, and although this duty may be implied by the above generalities, nevertheless, since Mr. Jefferson laid so much stress upon it, and since all must regard it as of fundamental importance, special notice is made of it here. This duty, a duty of States as well as of individuals, is the “absolute acquiescence in

⁷ First Inaugural.

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the decision of the majority." This is regarded as the "vital principle of republics, from which there is no appeal but to force, the vital principle and immediate parent of despotism."⁸

D. THE BASIS OF GOOD GOVERNMENT

What then is the basis of good government? We get a fairly clear notion of what a good government is if we agree with Mr. Jefferson when he says that "a wise and frugal government . . . shall restrain men from injuring one another, . . . shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned." We may attempt, therefore, to formulate a definition, and say that a good government is an organization of power whereby the affairs of a State or community are administered in such a manner as to secure to each individual protection from injury, freedom in well-doing, and possession of the fruits of labor.

This definition recognizes power or force as an essential of government. Power or force is plainly implied when


⁸ First Inaugural.

Mr. Jefferson says that government shall "restrain men"; and, obviously, no government can subsist, and be a *government*, without a power behind it, or an element of power in it. Whether it be a good government or a bad government, a club government or a love government—if it governs, it has power. Now, in a good government, whence is this power derived? Mr. Jefferson, in the Declaration of American Independence, replies, "from the consent of the governed." But suppose nobody wants to be governed? Suppose all men want to, and are determined to, "injure one another"? where is the power "to restrain" them? "But," we say, "all men are not tyrants and cutthroats; if it were so, no government worthy of the name would be possible. There are always some good men in a civilized community."

Suppose, then, that there are in a community five good men to every seven cutthroats; the cutthroats do not consent to be governed—in fact, they refuse outright to be restrained: how is any institution deserving the name of "government" to be established? "Well," we say, "under those conditions we must ad-


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mit that government, and particularly a good government, would again be an impossibility. There must be enough order-loving men to compel the lawless to obey the laws, if they will not do so otherwise." Just so. There must be a majority of law-abiding citizens in every community, if there is to be any safeguard against anarchy. This is a truth that appears to be self-evident. Now, it is also no less a fact, though perhaps not self-evident, that in every community there will always be some men—however few—that have to be compelled by force to obey the laws. Then, if we accept the two truths just developed,—and it seems impossible successfully to contradict them,—we are driven by relentless logic to abandon, or at least to modify, Mr. Jefferson's assertion, that "governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed." What he evidently means is, that "governments derive their just powers from the consent of the majority governed." There is no injustice shown Mr. Jefferson in acknowledging that in this particular instance he did not say precisely what he meant. His phrase, as he wrote it, is more



rhetorical than it could have been in any other form; and even as practical a man as Mr. Jefferson may sometimes sacrifice precise expression in order to say a thing forcibly. Let us conclude, then, that he expected the majority to rule, even though some have to be compelled to respect the rights of man; and, in connection with this conclusion, I think we are right in believing that Mr. Jefferson was also convinced that in civilized society there is apt to be always a majority in favor of law and order. ✓

If it be true, therefore, that we can rely on the majority of men in civilized society as being in favor of law and order, Mr. Jefferson was safe in saying that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed—the *majority* of the governed. The majority in favor of order and justice are governed by the laws, willingly, because they consent to the laws; the few opposed to order and justice are governed also, not because they consent to the laws, but because the laws constrain them with another sort of power; but, willing or unwilling, all are subject—governed by the consent of the majority governed.



A pernicious citizen does not necessarily have to be a cutthroat or an anarchist. He may, to all pretences and appearances, be a most zealous patriot; while he is in fact only a selfish office-seeker, or a shameless leech on the public treasury. An honest fanatic may turn out to be society's worst and most dangerous enemy. Obviously, the more men in society that are bad citizens, either because of ignorance, delusion, or lack of principle, the greater the menace to good government; and, conversely, the greater the majority of good citizens, whether they be politicians or mechanics, peasants or princes, the greater the safeguard against anarchy. Every individual added to the number of intelligent, conscientious voters, or citizens without votes, is an additional pillar in the temple of state. In the ideal state intelligence plays so active a part that every citizen is a potential factor; and this being true, the average state has a government good or bad, safe or unsafe, just in the proportion that the individual citizens are wise or ignorant, honest men or knaves.


No one recognized this fact more clearly than Mr. Jefferson; hence his con-

tinual insistence on each citizen being educated to act in accordance with principles of justice and right. He built his structure of government upon the principle that Emerson has expressed: "The appearance of character makes the state unnecessary. The wise man is the state. He needs no army, fort, or navy—he loves men too well"; . . . "of him the existing government is, it must be owned, a shabby imitation."⁹

I repeat, therefore, that I believe Mr. Jefferson was counting on a majority in favor of law and order. He exhorted every man to be a good citizen. Of course, he knew that this condition is never, in pre-millennial ages, to be realized; but he had good reason for believing that the majority—and the large majority—will, in greater or less degree, be inclined to accord their fellow-men at least some of the privileges esteemed by themselves. That this conclusion is true, with respect to civilized peoples, I am constrained to believe that the history of the world—certainly the history of America—bears witness. Let us remember, however, that due allowance must be made for

⁹ Emerson's *Essay on Politics*.


perverting influences and delusions that often lead nations, as well as individuals, temporarily astray. Let us also freely admit the fact that many evil and oppressive governments have existed for long periods, even among peoples possessing a considerable degree of enlightenment. There are various conceivable ways in which the order-loving many may be deluded and controlled by the selfish or vicious few—for a while, and to a certain extent; but any imposition that is violently unjust or unnatural cannot always endure. If no other way of adjustment is found, if the ear of oppression is too long deaf, the accumulated fires of revolution burst forth, and thrones, empty titles, palaces, and shackles of slavery are consumed. The first are put last, the last first. The power that seemed gives place to the power that is. The majority triumph. Should the criminal class ever be in the majority, order and justice would be at an end; life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness would be delusive names; good government would cease from the earth; the attempt to adjust grievances by an appeal to the ultimate method would only hasten an invitation to nihil-



ism and annihilation. Our only hope, therefore, for even-handed justice and for a safeguard against national disaster, is in the manhood of the many; good citizenship is the basis of good government.

E. THE ULTIMATE CORRECTIVE OF BAD GOVERNMENT

The ultimate corrective of bad government is revolution. It is a terrible remedy, and can be justified only by the failure of every other means. Happy is that people who yield their state to reform before the chance of reform is lost; and wise are those rulers who heed the voice of reform before the thunderbolts of revolution crash in their ears. These principles apply equally well to any form of government—a monarchy or an oligarchy as well as a republic. If the people demand reform, they will have it, or they will revolt. If the Czar of all the Russias has absolute power, let him use it well; he has it only because the majority of his subjects consent to give him unlimited power. As a matter of fact, he does not have absolute authority. He dares not utterly disregard the rights and interests of his people, else they will rise in their



power and exact from him the penalty that tyranny so often has had to pay.

In the case of a limited monarchy the same principle obtains. The power of Great Britain is not in Edward VII. and the two houses of Parliament, except only so far as they are trusted by the majority of the English people in the exercise of that power. Parliament can pass and enforce such laws as the people consent to obey; Parliament dare not refuse to pass such laws as the people demand. The English Reform Bills of the early half of last century did not originate in Parliament, or with the King, but in the suffering populace. The voice of the people was heard and heeded—wisely heeded, because the wail of popular distress would otherwise have been only the prelude of disaster to princes and kings. The thunders of crashing empires were loudly pounding at the Channel gates, and it was only the wise measures of reform that saved England from another bloody revolution.

That Mr. Jefferson regarded popular resistance to constituted authority as legitimate in its place, there can be no doubt. Revolt he recognized as the final resort

against injustice and oppression. But mark the qualifying term—not the first resort, but the *final* resort. The chief reason he gives for having such a “jealous care of the right of election by the people” is, that he considers this right “a mild and safe corrective of abuses which are lopped by the sword of revolution where peaceable remedies are unprovided”; and although we cannot be mistaken as to the radical purpose of the Declaration of Independence, we are also reminded in its opening sentences of how momentous a step is contemplated: “Prudence, indeed, will dictate, that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes, and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.”¹⁰

So this great teacher of political policies would teach patience under oppression, and earnest perseverance to obtain correction of abuses by all “mild and safe” means, before abolishing established forms—before unsheathing that two-

¹⁰ Declaration of Independence.

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edged and dangerous sword, dangerous alike to him who strikes as well as to him who receives the blow. "When a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism," then, and not until then, is it a people's "right," a people's "duty," to revolt, and "to provide new guards for their future security."¹¹

F. THE BEST FORM OF GOVERNMENT

Mr. Jefferson undoubtedly regarded no form of government so safe and so excellent for his own people as a republic. Whether he would have advocated a republican government for Spain or England, or whether, had he been a Spaniard or an Englishman, he would have advocated a republican government for America, is an interesting question for speculation;¹² but it is certain that he, an American, advocated unreservedly a republican government for America. "I know, indeed," he says, "that some honest

¹¹ Declaration of Independence.

¹² In a letter to Lafayette, Nov. 4, 1823, he says: "Whether the state of society in Europe can bear a republican government, I doubted, you know, when with you, and I do now."—*Works*, vol. vii, p. 325.

men fear that a republican government cannot be strong; that this government is not strong enough. But would the honest patriot, in the full tide of successful experiment, abandon a government which has so far kept us free and firm, on the theoretic and visionary fear that this government, the world's best hope, may by possibility want energy to preserve itself? I trust not. I believe this, on the contrary, the strongest government on earth. I believe it the only one where every man, at the call of the laws, would fly to the standard of the law, and would meet invasions of the public order as his own personal concern. Sometimes it is said that man cannot be trusted with the government of himself. Can he, then, be trusted with the government of others? Or have we found angels in the forms of kings to govern him? Let history answer this question.¹⁸

Some may contend that too much stress is laid here on the "kind" of government, and may point to the British Empire as an argument in favor of monarchy. But, then, is not the English government essentially republican, after all? Nevertheless, it is possible to lay too

¹⁸ First Inaugural.

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much stress on names and forms. The mere form of government, in truth, is not of so much importance, seeing that the form of any government may be quickly changed, if necessity demand it. Conditions vary, people vary, customs vary, and good government may be had under various forms; still, we are committed to the opinion of Mr. Jefferson, that a republic is best for America; and, in closing this paragraph, it may be well to quote his definition of a republic. "Indeed, it must be acknowledged," he says, "that the term *republic* is of very vague application in every language. . . . Were I to assign to this term a precise and definite idea, I would say, purely and simply, it means a government by its citizens in mass, acting directly and personally, according to rules established by the majority."¹⁴

¹⁴ *Works*, vol. vi, p. 605.

II

CONCERNING THE AMERICAN STATES.

A. THEIR INHERENT CHARACTER

THAT the several States forming the American Union were, subsequent to the Treaty of Paris in 1783, and previous to the adoption of the present Constitution in 1788, inherently sovereign and independent, there can be no doubt; that in forming the general government they all acted, each in its sovereign capacity, cannot be questioned; and that the several States, under the Constitution, are still sovereign, except in those particular powers expressly delegated to the federal government, is plainly implied in the Constitution itself,¹ and has been reasserted in turn by almost every State, or group of States, in the Union.

“Each State retains its sovereignty, freedom, and independence, and every

¹ Amendments to the Constitution, Art. x.

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power, jurisdiction, and right which is not by this confederation expressly delegated to the United States in Congress assembled.”²

“His Britannic Majesty acknowledges the said United States, viz: New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, to be Free, Sovereign, and Independent States; that he treats with them as such. . . .”³

“The ratification of the conventions of nine States shall be sufficient for the establishment of this Constitution between the States so ratifying it.”⁴

“Done in convention by the unanimous consent of the States present.”⁵

“The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.”⁶

² Articles of Confederation, Art. 2, July 9, 1778.

³ Art. 1 of Treaty of Paris, Sept. 3, 1783.

⁴ Constitution of the United States, Art. vii, 1.

⁵ End of Constitution.

⁶ Amendments to the Constitution, Art. x.

The doctrine of State sovereignty, as recognized in the above articles, and as promulgated by John C. Calhoun in 1838, when he declared, "that in the adoption of the Federal Constitution, the States adopting the same acted, severally, as free, independent, and sovereign States,"⁷ seems not to have been questioned at the time the Union was formed, and not for a number of years afterward. "New York voted ratification [of the Constitution] on the declared premise that 'the powers of government may be reassumed by the people whensoever it shall become necessary to their happiness.'"⁸ "Virginia said, 'That the powers granted under the Constitution, being derived from the people of the United States, may be resumed by them, whensoever the same shall be perverted to their injury or oppression; and that every power not granted thereby, remains with them and at their will.'"⁹ "It was clearly understood that those who put the government together [the States] could take it down again."¹⁰

⁷ *Mo. Compromise and its Repeal*, p. 139.

⁸ Powell's *Nullification and Secession in the United States*, p. 12.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

Several of the States were slow in ratifying the Constitution. Rhode Island held off till 1790; but no effort was made to compel any State to enter the compact. Each acted freely and independently. Mr. Madison, in 1799, declared: "The Constitution of the United States was framed by the sanction of the States, given by each in its sovereign capacity."¹¹

That Mr. Jefferson shared fully in this acknowledgment of State sovereignty will become more apparent as we proceed, and must now be apparent at once to anyone who will reflect that he is the chief exponent of individualism in our republic, as opposed to centralism and paternalism. We need make here only one quotation from him on the subject: "I deem as an essential principle of our government, the support of the State governments in all their rights, as the most competent administrations for our domestic concerns and the surest bulwarks against anti-republican tendencies."¹²

B. THEIR RELATION TO ONE ANOTHER

One of the most important features to contemplate in the history of our country,

¹¹ *Powell's Nullification and Secession in the United States*, p. 102.

¹² *The Statesman's Manual*, vol. i, p. 151.

is the jealousy that has existed from time to time between different States and different sections. Even before our national history begins we find these local jealousies arising, and not only hindering trade and social intercourse, but even preventing a combined defense against the depredations of the savage tribes. In 1754 a congress of commissioners from the different colonies met at Albany, for the purpose of concerting together with one another and with the friendly Indians upon measures of defense against the hostile Indians and the French. Benjamin Franklin brought forward a plan for uniting the colonies for defense and for some other purposes of general utility; but the plan was rejected by the colonial legislatures as likely to abridge their authorities, and by the British Board of Trade as likely to foster colonial independence;¹³ and when the struggle for independence was finally inaugurated, the reluctance to unite upon any definite policy was a serious impediment to success. The several States had little respect for one another, and perhaps less for the federal Congress; the troops of the different

¹³ Lecky's *American Revolution*, p. 11.

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States were often reluctant to serve except in their own districts, and under their own officers. When independence was finally gained, the same petty jealousies remained. When the Constitutional Convention assembled in Philadelphia in 1787, their greatest difficulties were encountered in reconciling the "large" and "small" States.¹⁴ One step was gained when it was agreed to put the States on an equality in the Convention, the votes of each counting as one. Still, Pennsylvania refused to be on an equal footing with little New Jersey. One of the delegates from Delaware declared that his State would form a foreign alliance rather than enter a Union in which it would be at a disadvantage with larger States. In 1782 Pennsylvania had threatened to break away from the Confederacy and use her taxes for her individual ends. Rhode Island was continually threatening to start off alone.¹⁵ Finally, by providing for a senate in the general plan of government, in which each State should have an equal representation, and by various other compromises, so-

¹⁴ Johnson's *History of the United States*, p. 141.

¹⁵ *Nullification and Secession*, p. 12.

called, the Constitution was adopted. We see, then, that the great object in view was to preserve the several States on an equal footing, except, of course, in respect to those advantages of population or position over which legislation has no control.

● It is simply stating what must be obvious to all, to say that Mr. Jefferson, who advocated "equal and exact justice to all men," also advocated equal and exact justice to all the States. He would be satisfied with nothing less than the just equality of States, as guaranteed by the Constitution. Such declarations as the following: that "full faith and credit shall be given in each State to the public acts, records, and judicial proceedings of every other State"; that "the citizens of each State shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States"; and that "nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to prejudice any claims of the United States, or of any particular State," were in true harmony with his ideas.



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C. THEIR RELATION TO THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT

On the relation that should exist between the States and the general government, Mr. Jefferson's views are so definite and so clearly expressed that any attempt to state them differently, or to comment upon them, would be utterly out of place; so I shall simply give the gist of these opinions as he has repeatedly expressed them.

In a letter written from Monticello, June 5, 1824, to Major John Cartwright, we find the following:

“With respect to our State and federal governments, I do not think their relations are correctly understood by foreigners. They generally suppose the former subordinate to the latter. But this is not the case. They are co-ordinate departments of one simple and integral whole. To the State governments are reserved all legislation and administration, in affairs which concern their own citizens only, and to the federal government is given whatever concerns foreigners, or the citizens of other States; these functions alone being made federal. The one is the do-

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mestic, the other the foreign branch of the same government; neither having control over the other, but within its own department. There are one or two exceptions only to this partition of power. But, you may ask, if the two departments should claim each the same subject of power, where is the common umpire to decide ultimately between them? In cases of little importance or urgency, the prudence of both parties will keep them aloof from the questionable ground; but if it can neither be avoided nor compromised, a convention of the States must be called, to ascribe the doubtful power to that department which they may think best. You will perceive by these details, that we have not yet so far perfected our constitutions as to venture to make them unchangeable. But still, in their present state, we consider them not otherwise changeable than by the authority of the people, on a special election of representatives for that purpose expressly: they are until then the *lex legum*." ¹⁶

Mr. Jefferson, in the passage just quoted, clearly defines, in general terms, the relation of State and federal govern-

¹⁶ *Works*, vol. vii, p. 358.

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ments, the limits of power in each, and the method of determining disputed ground. In a letter to Judge Johnson, written June 12, 1823, he lays down the same principles:

"I ask for no straining of words against the General Government, nor yet against the States. I believe the States can best govern our home concerns, and the General Government our foreign ones. I wish, therefore, to see maintained that wholesome distribution of powers established by the Constitution for the limitation of both; and never to see all offices transferred to Washington, where, further withdrawn from the eyes of the people, they may more secretly be bought and sold as at market.

"But the Chief Justice [Marshall] says, 'there must be an ultimate arbiter somewhere.' True, there must; but does that prove it is either party? The ultimate arbiter is the people of the Union, assembled by their deputies in convention, at the call of Congress, or of two-thirds of the States."¹⁷


An earlier letter, written January 26, 1811, shows such admirable foresight that

¹⁷ *Works*, vol. vii, p. 297.

I cannot forbear quoting a small part of it also; and I am constrained to believe that had the sentiments and principles therein embodied been consistently followed for a half century after they were expressed, that the most terrible chapter of our history would be far less terrible than it is. Statesmanship might have cured what the sword lopped off.

"The true barriers of our liberty in this country," writes Mr. Jefferson in the letter referred to, "are our State governments; . . . Seventeen distinct States, amalgamated into one as to their foreign concerns, but single and independent as to their internal administration, . . . can never be so fascinated by the arts of one man, as to submit voluntarily to his usurpation. Nor can they be constrained to it by any force he can possess. . . .

"Dangers of another kind might more reasonably be apprehended from this perfect and distinct organization, civil and military, of the States; to wit, that certain States from local and occasional discontents, might attempt to secede from the Union. . . . But it is not probable that local discontents can spread to such an extent, as to be able to face the sound



parts of so extensive an Union; and if ever they should reach the majority, they would then become the regular government, acquire the ascendancy in Congress, and be able to redress their own grievances by laws peaceably and constitutionally passed.”¹⁸

In conclusion of this division of our study, let us return again to Mr. Jefferson's first Inaugural Address for a terse statement of both sides of the question; for it is only in a proper balance of State and federal powers that our best interests are secured:

“I deem as essential principles of our government, the support of the State governments in all their rights, as the most competent administrations for our domestic concerns and the surest bulwarks against anti-republican tendencies; the preservation of the general government in its whole Constitutional vigor, as the sheet anchor of our peace at home and safety abroad.”

¹⁸ *Works*, vol. v, p. 570.

III

CONCERNING THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

A. ITS FUNCTIONS

THE functions of the federal government have already been defined in general terms in the preceding paragraphs. It will be observed that while Mr. Jefferson constantly insisted upon the rights and powers of the States, that he just as urgently insisted upon the prescribed rights and powers of the central government—aiming steadily at a proper balance of the two.

“I do not think it for the interest of the general government itself,” he writes to Peregrine Fitzhugh, in 1798, “and still less of the Union at large, that the State governments should be so little respected as they have been. However, I dare say that in time all these as well as their central government, like the planets revolving round their common sun, acting and

acted upon according to their respective weights and distances, will produce that beautiful equilibrium on which our Constitution is founded, and which I believe it will exhibit to the world in a degree of perfection, unexampled but in the planetary system itself. The enlightened statesman, therefore, will endeavor to preserve the weight and influence of every part, as too much given to any member of it would destroy the general equilibrium.”¹

- 9 The particular functions of the federal government are specified in the Constitution. The power of Congress to lay and collect taxes, to regulate commerce, to coin money, to declare war, to constitute inferior tribunals, to raise and support armies and navies; the power of the Executive to command the armies and navies, to make treaties, to appoint public ministers; the power of the Supreme Court to try public ministers, to try cases in which the United States is a party, and cases between the States—these are some of the particular functions of the central government; and these Mr. Jefferson would have preserved in their “whole Con-

¹ *Works*, vol. iv, p. 217.

stitutional vigor." Moreover, he would have a proper balance between the several general departments. "I am for preserving . . . to the legislature of the Union its Constitutional share in the division of powers," he writes to Elbridge Gerry; "I am not," he continues, "for transferring all the powers of the States to the General Government, and all those of that government to the executive branch."²

In short, the general government is to be the general agent of the States, and of the people through the States, and is to perform those specified duties which, on account of their general character, cannot be performed by a particular State.

B. ITS ESSENTIAL FEATURES

Under this head will be noticed some of the particular objects that Mr. Jefferson thought should be aimed at in the administration of public affairs, together with some of the features that he regarded as essential to the maintenance of good government.

Simplicity of administration should be a primary object. Offices should not be

² *Works*, vol. iv, p. 268.

unnecessarily multiplied, and the general government should not burden itself with what the local governments can do more easily and effectively.* “When we consider that this government is charged with the external and mutual relations only of these States; that the States themselves have principal care of our persons, our property, and our reputation, constituting the great field of human concerns, we may well doubt whether our organization is not too complicated, too expensive; whether offices and officers have not been multiplied unnecessarily, and sometimes injuriously to the service they were meant to promote. . . . The expenses of diplomatic agency have been considerably diminished. The inspectors of internal revenue who were found to obstruct the accountability of the institution, have been discontinued. Several agencies created by executive authority, on salaries fixed by that also, have been suppressed. . . . Other reformatations of the same kind will be pursued with that caution which is requisite in removing useless things, not to injure what is retained.”⁸

Such a policy as this, judiciously pur-

⁸ *Statesman's Manual*, vol. i, p. 154.

sued, would not only save expense, expedite business, and lend effectiveness to administration, but would also remove many of the temptations to weak officials and unprincipled office-seekers.

The minimum should be sought after in taxation. "Considering the general tendency to multiply offices and dependencies, and to increase expense to the ultimate term of burden which the citizen can bear, it behooves us to avail ourselves of every occasion which presents itself for taking off the surcharge; that it never may be seen here that, after leaving to labor the smallest portion of its earnings on which it can subsist, government shall itself consume the residue of what it was instituted to guard."⁴

We cannot read these sentences without being impressed with the feeling and vividness with which the effects of oppressive taxation are set forth. Does the author have in mind the burdens of British "tyranny," under which his generation had groaned for a while? Perhaps so. But his experience was broader than that. The oppression of Parliament was bad enough, no doubt; but compared with an-

⁴ *Statesman's Manual*, vol. 1, p. 155.

other oppressive system with which Mr. Jefferson had been made familiar, it was as nothing. From March, 1785, to October, 1789, he had been our representative at Paris; and we may believe that those four years and a half, spent among a people whose king was the nation, whose capital was the country, and whose last black loaf was snatched from their starving lips to feed the sleek cur of a court favorite, presented an object lesson of centralism, of favoritism, and of oppression so pathetic in its progress and so terrible in its results that it was never forgotten.

- Of course, an obvious means of avoiding heavy taxes is to avoid making debts. "Economy in the public expense" should be observed, in order "that labor may be lightly burdened." This, we have already seen, was one of the advantages to be secured by a simplicity of the system of public administration. Mr. Jefferson neglected no opportunity to teach economy in all the departments of government; recognizing the necessity of this principle in States as well as in individuals. It is to be regretted that we have had no Jefferson in recent days to teach the same

lesson, when our government, with seeming great composure, was firing the hard-earned wages of labor through thirteen-inch guns at the rate of a million dollars from sunrise till sunset.

It was regarded of great importance by Mr. Jefferson that our country should be free from large standing armies. He not only regarded them as unnecessary, but as actually harmful. He was in favor, therefore, of the general government maintaining a regular military force of only sufficient number for outpost garrisons in time of peace, and to serve as a nucleus for the militia in case of war. By thus reducing the regular army to the smallest possible number, a great burden of expense would be avoided. Besides this, it was his opinion that a government in constant preparation for war would be more likely, on that account, to become involved in war. He was not in favor of allowing the country to neglect precautions for its public safety, as we shall presently see; but he was opposed to a useless and burdensome military equipment, both on the ground of economy and from the conviction that peace would thereby be endangered.

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It is entirely possible that he had on this point drawn valuable inferences from his observations in France and other parts of Europe, where the evils of militarism were rife, and have survived even to the present day.

I have said that Mr. Jefferson was not careless of the public safety, although he opposed large standing armies. His plan was that the general government should give all possible encouragement to a well-regulated militia system in each State, as affording a natural, non-oppressive, and effective means of defense. This plan is repeatedly advocated. The following quotation is from his first annual message:

“For defense against invasion their number [the surplus number of regular troops] is as nothing; nor is it conceived needful or safe that a standing army should be kept up in time of peace for that purpose. Uncertain as we must ever be of the particular point in our circumference where an enemy may choose to invade us, the only force which can be ready at every point and competent to oppose them, is the body of neighboring citizens as formed into a militia. On these, collected from the points most convenient, in num-

bers proportioned to the invading foe, it is best to rely, not only to meet the first attack, but if it threatens to be permanent, to maintain the defense until regulars may be engaged to relieve them. These considerations render it important that we should at every session continue to amend the defects which from time to time show themselves in the laws for regulating the militia, until they are sufficiently perfect.”⁵

In opposing a standing army, it is probable that Mr. Jefferson recalled some of the unfortunate instances in which the military power had, after a while, dominated the whole governmental system. At any rate, he not only opposed militarism, but was careful at the same time to insist specifically upon preserving the “supremacy of the civil over the military authority,” regarding this as one of the essential features of our government.⁶

Another feature of our republic, regarded as vitally essential, and worthy of being maintained as such, was freedom of the press. As a pool without a current of any sort to agitate it becomes stagnant

⁵ *Statesman's Manual*, vol. i, p. 155.

⁶ First Inaugural.

and poisonous, so a nation without a medium of communication of thought, without a bulletin to proclaim its doings, without a pillory for injustice, and a voice to demand reform, loses its healthy vigor, becomes sluggish, and soon begins to decay. "Governments are republican only in proportion as they embody the will of their people, and execute it."⁷ The press makes the will of the people known. Then, if changes of public policy become expedient from time to time, in what other way can these changes be so intelligently and generally considered as by means of the press?

Mr. Jefferson was convinced that changes from time to time become necessary. "Some men," said he, "look at constitutions with sanctimonious reverence, and deem them like the ark of the covenant, too sacred to be touched. They ascribe to the men of the preceding age a wisdom more than human, and suppose what they did to be beyond amendment. I knew that age [the age that formed the Constitution of Virginia] well; I belonged to it, and labored with it. It deserved well of its country. It was very

⁷ *Works*, vol. vii, p. 9.

like the present, but without the experience of the present; and forty years of experience in government is worth a century of book-reading, and this they would say themselves, were they to rise from the dead. I am certainly not an advocate for frequent and untried changes in laws and constitutions. . . . But I know also, that laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. . . . We might as well require a man to wear still the coat which fitted him when a boy, as civilized society to remain ever under the regimen of their barbarous ancestors. It is this preposterous idea which has lately deluged Europe in blood. Their monarchs, instead of wisely yielding to the gradual change of circumstances, . . . have clung to old abuses, . . . and obliged their subjects to seek through blood and violence rash and ruinous innovations, which, had they been referred to the peaceful deliberations and collected wisdom of the nation, would have been put into acceptable and salutary forms.”⁸

Here Mr. Jefferson makes direct allu-

⁸ Letter to Kercheval, written July 12, 1816.—*Works*, vol. vii, p. 14.

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sion to the series of "bloody deluges" inaugurated by the French Revolution; and while he does not in this connection mention how the suppression of political discussion through the press hastened and augmented those terrible upheavals, he certainly was aware of the fact and duly appreciated its significance. "If the rulers of France, instead of exerting themselves to silence the national literature, had yielded to its suggestions, and had receded before the pressure of advancing knowledge, the fatal collision would have been avoided; because the passions which caused the collision would have been appeased."⁹ In view, then, of these facts, that evolution of governmental systems attends the progress of nations, and that the public press is perhaps the best means of aiding this development and of providing a safety-vent against revolution, we are not surprised that Mr. Jefferson repeatedly declared, "I am for freedom of the press."

But is not freedom of the press one of the particular privileges guarded by the Constitution?¹⁰ True, it is. Yet, not-

⁹ Buckle, *Dabney's Causes of the French Revolution*, p. 201.

¹⁰ *Amendments to the Constitution*, Art. i.

withstanding that fact, Mr. Jefferson was wise enough to know that the Constitution may sometimes be violated, unless it is sustained by an overwhelming public opinion. In fact, he had witnessed a violation of this very provision in the passage of the Sedition Act, in 1798; and when Virginia and Kentucky declared that act unjust and illegal, it was Jefferson's hand that penned Kentucky's resolutions.

The judicious encouragement of industry by the general government, within the "pale of constitutional powers," was regarded as of sufficient importance to elicit frequent mention in Mr. Jefferson's messages to Congress. His views upon the best means of fostering industry will be further discussed under another head.

The fostering of science and art and the general diffusion of knowledge were also regarded by Mr. Jefferson as coming in some measure under the duties incumbent upon our federal government. In a republic like ours, where so much depends upon the individual citizen, it is of the utmost importance that each individual possess that degree of culture and broad-mindedness that will enable him to act with intelligence in the different ques-

tions proposed to the public judgment. "The arraignment of all abuses at the bar of public reason" makes essential "the diffusion of information."¹¹ Therefore, Mr. Jefferson had the "two great measures at heart, without which no republic can maintain itself in strength—that of general education, to enable every man to judge for himself what will secure or endanger his freedom; and the division of every county into hundreds, of such size that all the children of each will be within reach of a central school in it."¹² Thus his plans embraced schemes both local and national, in each taking that practical turn which so eminently characterized all of his projects. The education itself that he proposed was of a practical as well as of a theoretical sort. The good of the people required, he thought, that while some were instructed "in general, competently to the common business of life," that others should "employ their genius with necessary information to the useful arts, to inventions for saving labor and increasing our comforts, to nourishing our health, to civil government, military sci-

¹¹ First Inaugural.

¹² *Works*, vol. v, p. 525.

ence," etc.¹⁸ While he would in education, as in all other things, place responsibility upon the individual and upon private institutions, in a degree commensurate with their ability, he nevertheless was of the opinion that the general government was under obligation for its share in the great problem of making American citizens; and, in common with Washington and other statesmen of the period, he cherished the plan for a great national university, which should fittingly crown the symmetrical proportions of his educational structure. In his sixth annual message to Congress he recommends such an institution to their consideration. "Education," he says to them, "is here placed among the articles of public care, not that it would be proposed to take its ordinary branches out of the hands of private enterprise, which manages so much better all the concerns to which it is equal; but a public institution can alone supply those sciences which though rarely called for are yet necessary to complete the circle, all the parts of which contribute to the improvement of the country and some of them to its preservation. The subject is

¹⁸ *Works*, vol. vii, p. 187.

now proposed for the consideration of Congress, because, if approved by the time the State legislatures shall have deliberated on this extension of the federal trusts, and the laws shall be passed and other arrangements made for their execution, the necessary funds will be on hand and without employment. I suppose an amendment to the Constitution, by consent of the States, necessary, because the objects now recommended are not among those enumerated in the Constitution, and to which it permits the public moneys to be applied. The present consideration of a national establishment for education, particularly, is rendered proper by this circumstance also, that if Congress, approving the proposition, shall yet think it more eligible to found it on a donation of lands, they have it now in their power to endow it with those which will be among the earliest to produce the necessary income. This foundation would have the advantage of being independent in war, which may suspend other improvements by requiring for its own purposes the resources destined for them."¹⁴

¹⁴ *Statesman's Manual*, vol. i, p. 191.

IV

CONCERNING THE UNITED STATES IN RELATION TO FOREIGN POWERS

A. AS TO COMMERCE

MR. JEFFERSON regarded commerce as the "handmaid" of agriculture,¹ and as one of the "pillars of our prosperity." He was warmly in favor, therefore, of encouraging commerce and attendant industries by all judicious and legitimate means; but much legislation he did not consider the best means. In his letter to Elbridge Gerry he says: "I am for free commerce with all nations." He makes the following declarations in his first annual message to Congress: "Agriculture, manufactures, commerce, and navigation, the four pillars of our prosperity, are the most thriving when left most free to individual enterprise. Protection from

¹ First Inaugural.

casual embarrassments, however, may sometimes be reasonably interposed. If in the course of your observations or inquiries they should appear to need any aid within the limits of our constitutional powers, your sense of their importance is a sufficient assurance they will occupy your attention.”²

From these statements it is evident that the normal condition of trade was not considered attainable by legislation; but on the contrary, that the “let alone” policy is best, thus allowing the natural laws of supply and demand to adjust commerce to its proper balance. This is substantially the same theory as that advocated by Adam Smith:

“The true line of policy that governments should follow, as respects commercial affairs, has been distinctly traced by Mr. Alexander Baring (now Lord Ashburton). ‘The only beneficial care,’ says he, ‘a government can take of commerce, is to afford it general protection in time of war, to remove by treaties the restrictions of foreign governments in time of peace, and cautiously to abstain from any, however plausible, of its own creat-

² *Statesman's Manual*, p. 156, vol. i.

ing. If every law of regulation, either of our internal or external trade, were repealed, with the exception of those necessary for the collection of revenue, it would be an undoubted benefit to commerce, as well as to the community at large. An avowed system of leaving things to take their own course, and of not listening to the interested solicitations of one class or another for relief, whenever the imprudence of speculation has occasioned losses, would, sooner than any artificial remedy, reproduce that equilibrium of demand and supply, which the ardor of gain will frequently derange, but which the same cause, when let alone, will as infallibly restore.' ”³

That Mr. Jefferson may have adopted some of his ideas on political economy from the study of Dr. Smith's great work, is possible. In a letter to John Norvell, June 11, 1807, he says: “If your views of political inquiry go further, to the subjects of money and commerce, Smith's ‘Wealth of Nations’ is the best book to be read, unless Say's ‘Political Economy’ can be had, which treats the same subjects on the same principles, but in a

³ Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, p. 544.

shorter compass and more lucid manner.”⁴ But even if Mr. Jefferson had never read the “Wealth of Nations,” it is probable that his opinions as to trade regulations would have been substantially the same. We can scarcely imagine that his long residence in France, where the meddlesome hand of law, under the pretense of helping trade, really stifled it, could have left him blinded to the evils of such a system; and he doubtless had other ample opportunities to observe the pernicious effects of a similar system when applied to international affairs.

That Mr. Jefferson, therefore, regarded free trade as the normal policy—the policy least likely to produce international derangement, and most efficient in fostering home industries, seems undeniable. Furthermore, he demanded reciprocity, on the part of other nations; and, in order to induce them to remove, or at least to modify, such trade restrictions as interfered with American commerce, he was even ready to consent, if necessary, to pass counter restrictions to some extent at home. This compromise policy, of attempting the cure of one evil

⁴ *Works*, vol. v, p. 91.

by submitting to another for a while, is suggested as an undesirable alternative in a report on the "Privileges and Restrictions on the Commerce of the United States in Foreign Countries," made while Mr. Jefferson was Secretary of State under Washington:

"Such being the restrictions on the commerce and navigation of the United States; the question is, in what way they may best be removed, modified or counteracted?

"As to commerce, two methods occur. 1. By friendly arrangements with the several nations with whom these restrictions exist: or, 2. By the separate act of our own legislatures for countervailing their effects.

"There can be no doubt but that of these two, friendly arrangement is the most eligible. Instead of embarrassing commerce under piles of regulating laws, duties, and prohibitions, could it be relieved from all its shackles in all parts of the world, could every country be employed in producing that which nature has best fitted it to produce, and each be free to exchange with others mutual sur-

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pluses for mutual wants, the greatest mass possible would then be produced of those things which contribute to human life and human happiness; the numbers of mankind would be increased, and their condition bettered.”⁵

While the foregoing paragraphs show how desirous Mr. Jefferson was to induce foreign nations to abandon all restrictions on American commerce, they also prove how unwilling he was to secure even that object by putting legislative “embarrassments” on trade. The following quotation, from his second annual message, indicates his willingness, on the other hand, to coöperate in reciprocal adjustments:

“It is with satisfaction I lay before you an act of the British Parliament anticipating this subject so far as to authorize a mutual abolition of the duties and countervailing duties permitted under the treaty of 1794. It shows on their part a spirit of justice and friendly accommodation which it is our duty and our interest to cultivate with all nations. Whether this will produce a due equality in the navigation between the two countries, is a subject for your consideration.”⁶

⁵ *Works*, vol. vii, pp. 645, 646.

⁶ *Statesman's Manual*, p. 158, vol. i.

B. AS TO FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

This topic may be dismissed with a very brief discussion. It might have been omitted altogether, had not Mr. Jefferson considered it worthy of repeated notice. It ought not to be necessary to assert that strict business integrity is as much demanded of nations as of individuals; it ought not to be necessary to declare that no degree of power or height of prestige can relieve a people from the obligation to pay their just debts; yet it may be that Mr. Jefferson, when assuming the most responsible office in the gift of a young nation—"a rising nation, engaged in commerce with nations that feel power and forget right, advancing rapidly to destinies beyond the reach of mortal eye,"—it may be, I say, that he was wise to include among the "essential principles" of government for that young nation, "the honest payment of debts and sacred preservation of the public faith."

C. AS TO GENERAL ATTITUDE

In attempting to indicate Mr. Jefferson's views as to the general attitude the United States should maintain with re-

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spect to foreign powers, I can do no better than to let him speak, in the main, for himself:

"Peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations—entangling alliances with none"—this, he asserted, is one of the essential principles of our government.⁷ Twenty-two years after the above sentiment was expressed we find the following in a letter to President Monroe:

"I have ever deemed it fundamental for the United States, never to take active part in the quarrels of Europe. Their political interests are entirely distinct from ours. Their mutual jealousies, their balance of power, their complicated alliances, their forms and principles of government, are all foreign to us. They are nations of eternal war. All their energies are expended in the destruction of the labor, property, and lives of their people. [Here, I think, Mr. Jefferson was betrayed into some exaggeration.] On our part, never had a people so favorable a chance of trying the opposite system, of peace and fraternity with mankind, and the direction of all our means and faculties to the purposes of improvement instead of destruction. With Europe we have few occasions of

⁷ First Inaugural.

collision, and these, with a little prudence and forbearance, may be generally accommodated.”⁸

To show how anxious Mr. Jefferson was to preserve “peace” and “honest friendship” with other nations, while avoiding “entangling alliances,” we have but to quote the following from his third annual message:

“We have seen with sincere concern the flames of war lighted up again in Europe, and nations with which we have the most friendly and useful relations engaged in mutual destruction. . . . In the course of this conflict, let it be our endeavor, as it is our interest and desire, to cultivate the friendship of the belligerent nations by every act of justice and innocent kindness; to receive their armed vessels with hospitality from the distresses of the sea, but to administer the means of annoyance to none; to establish in our harbors such a police as may maintain law and order; to restrain our citizens from embarking individually in a war in which their country takes no part; to punish severely those persons, citizen or alien, who shall usurp the cover of our flag for vessels not enti-

⁸ *Works*, vol. vii, p. 288.

tled to it, infecting thereby with suspicion those of real Americans, and committing us into controversies for the redress of wrongs not our own; to exact from every nation the observance, toward our vessels and citizens, of those principles and practices which all civilized people acknowledge; to merit the character of a just nation, and maintain that of an independent one, preferring every consequence to insult and habitual wrong.”⁹

From the foregoing it is manifest that while Mr. Jefferson endeavored to preserve peace by strict justice to other nations, he also demanded justice from them in return for friendship. “We must make the interest of every nation stand surety for their justice, and their own loss to follow injury to us, as effect follows its cause,” he writes to Edward Rutledge, in 1797.¹⁰ Nevertheless, his forbearance with injustice was great, as was shown in numerous instances—notably when the depredations of England upon our commerce and the rights of our seamen had been for a long period well-nigh unbearable; and if anyone is disposed to say that

⁹ *Statesman's Manual*, vol. i, p. 165.

¹⁰ *Works*, vol. iv, p. 191.

it was only fear of England's power that delayed action against her injustice, we have only to remember that the same spirit of patience was manifested toward the Barbary powers, until repeated impudence and insults were added to injury. Let us note also in this connection the President's language to the Secretary of State, in 1805, concerning the most formidable leader in Europe: . . . "Considering the character of Bonaparte, I think it material at once to let him see that we are not of the powers who will receive his orders." ¹¹

To say that Mr. Jefferson, in his efforts to secure peace and friendship with foreign powers, was above all seeking the interests of the United States, is only to speak the truth; and it takes but little argument to convince us that his country's well-earned prosperity is a true statesman's highest object. By seeking to elevate his own country, by all fair and honorable means, he injures no other commonwealth; but, on the contrary, elevates all mankind. "The first object of my heart," writes Jefferson to Gerry, "is my own country. In that is embarked my

¹¹ Randall's *Life of Jefferson*, vol. 3, p. 147.

family, my fortune, and my own existence. I have not one farthing of interest, nor one fiber of attachment out of it, nor a single motive of preference of any one nation to another, but in proportion as they are more or less friendly to us.”¹²

If Mr. Jefferson gave his consent to retaliatory measures, when all other means of redress had been tried without success, he also was a strong advocate of national gratitude. “To say . . . that gratitude is never to enter into the motives of national conduct, is to revive a principle which has been buried for centuries, with its kindred principles of the lawfulness of assassination, poison, perjury, etc. All of these were legitimate principles in the dark ages which intervened between ancient and modern civilization, but exploded and held in just horror in the eighteenth century. I know but one code of morality for men, whether acting singly or collectively. . . . But I indulge myself in these reflections because my own feelings run me into them; . . . Let us hope that our new government will take some other occasion to show that they mean to proscribe no virtue from the canons of

¹² Randall's *Life of Jefferson*, vol. 2, p. 469.

their conduct with other nations. In every other instance, the new government has ushered itself to the world as honest, masculine, and dignified.”¹⁸

We may sum up, then, in concluding this division, with the words employed at the beginning: “Peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations—entangling alliances with none.” Commerce, left free, if possible, from all legal interference; friendship, honestly secured and honestly maintained; peace, above all, but not a policy of peace that is blind to outrage, or that tolerates piracy, or pays tribute. The American Eagle grasps in one talon the olive branch, in the other, thunderbolts. The olive branch is extended to all alike; it is proffered repeatedly; it is not withheld on slight provocation; it is withdrawn only when public safety or national honor is in direct jeopardy.

¹⁸ Randall's *Life of Jefferson*, vol. 1, p. 541.

V

CONCERNING VARIOUS QUESTIONS OF IMPORTANCE

A. THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION

THE United States Constitution, in the main, embodied Mr. Jefferson's ideas. Being in Paris at the time of its adoption, he had no part in framing it; nevertheless, he heartily favored its leading principles, and regarded it as fairly complete. Some additional stipulations that he desired were, "Freedom of religion, freedom of the press, freedom of commerce, no suspension of habeas corpus, and no standing army."¹ He also desired a limitation of the term of presidential service and the placing of the choice of president more effectually in the hands of the people.² Some of these additional features, but not all, were secured by amendments; nevertheless, Mr. Jefferson was as stanch a supporter of the Constitution as if it had em-

¹ Powell's *Nullification and Secession*, p. 7.

² *Works*, vol. vii, p. 336.

braced all his ideas. He would preserve the general government "in its whole constitutional vigor, as the sheet anchor of our peace at home and safety abroad,"³ and "cherish the federal union as the only rock of safety";⁴ yet he was just as careful "to keep in all things within the pale of our constitutional powers."⁵ He would interpret the Constitution "according to its obvious principles, and those on which it was known to be received." "On every question of construction," said he, [let us] "carry ourselves back to the time when the Constitution was adopted, recollect the spirit manifested in the debates, and instead of trying what meaning may be squeezed out of the text, or invented against it, conform to the probable one in which it was passed."⁶ He would also have changes made in the Constitution, as conditions might require: "The real friends of the Constitution in its federal form, if they wish it to be immortal, should be attentive, by amendments, to make it keep pace with the advance of the age in science and experience."⁷

³ First Inaugural.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴ Second Annual Message.

⁶ *Works*, vol. vii, p. 296.

⁷ *Works*, vol. vii, p. 336.

B. AFRICAN SLAVERY

Although Mr. Jefferson himself had a large number of slaves, he was personally opposed to the institution of slavery, and lost no opportunity to speak against it. While yet a young man, and a new member of the Virginia Legislature, he drew upon himself, in conjunction with Colonel Bland, the denunciations of the House, by seconding a proposal for certain moderate extensions of the laws to the negroes.⁸ As President of the United States he called the attention of Congress, notably in his sixth annual message, to the approach of the period (January 1, 1808), at which they might interpose their authority constitutionally to stop the foreign slave trade—"to withdraw the citizens of the United States from all further participation in those violations of human rights which have been so long continued on the unoffending inhabitants of Africa, and which the morality, the reputation, and the best interests of our country have long been eager to proscribe."⁹ In 1814 he writes as follows to Edward Coles: "Your

⁸ Randall's *Life of Jefferson*, vol. 3, p. 643.

⁹ *Statesman's Manual*, p. 190.

solitary but welcome voice is the first which has brought this sound to my ears; and I have considered the general silence which prevails on this subject, as indicating an apathy unfavorable to every hope. Yet the hour of emancipation is advancing in the march of time. It will come; and whether brought on by the generous energy of our own minds, or by the bloody process of St. Domingo, . . . is a leaf of our history not yet turned over.

"As to the method by which this difficult work is to be effected, if permitted to be done by ourselves, I have seen no proposition so expedient, on the whole, as that of emancipation of those born after a given day, and of their education and expatriation at a proper age. This would give time for a gradual extinction of that species of labor, and substitution of another, and lessen the severity of the shock, which an operation so fundamental cannot fail to produce. The idea of emancipating the whole at once, the old as well as the young, and retaining them here, is of those only who have not the guide of either knowledge or experience on the subject."¹⁰

¹⁰ Randall's *Life of Jefferson*, vol. 3, p. 644.

We observe from the foregoing quotation that Mr. Jefferson's plan for emancipation was very similar to that of Henry Clay, who would have provided for gradual emancipation, for deportation, and for having the slaves themselves to earn the cost of their transportation and settlement. Jefferson would have provided for gradual emancipation, for education, and for deportation. Says his biographer, Randall: "His hostility to African slavery is earnestly, vehemently expressed; and he avows the opinion . . . that it was impossible for the two races to live equally free in the same government . . . that, accordingly, emancipation and 'deportation' should go hand in hand—and that these processes should be gradual enough to make proper provisions for the blacks in their new country, and fill their places in this with free white laborers."¹¹

How Mr. Jefferson would attempt to solve the problem that confronts us to-day,—that of adjusting the two races "equally free in the same government,"—can only be conjectured. He unquestionably would spare no means for their edu-

¹¹ *Life of Jefferson*, vol. 1, p. 370.

cation,—that of the negro as well as the white; for although he ventures the opinion that the “black man in his present state is not equal in body and mind to the white man,” he also says: “It would be hazardous to affirm that, equally cultivated for a few generations, he would not become so.”¹² Perhaps, could he observe our conditions now, he would concur in the opinion recently expressed by the colored educator of Savannah, Georgia, Major R. R. Wright, that “if the government had given each colored man forty acres and a mule instead of the ballot it would have been of more profit to the race.” In the training of the negro, I think it is probable he would emphasize industrial features; and this view appears the more tenable when we remember the care he exercised in providing his workshops with carpenters, blacksmiths, wheelwrights, and nailsmiths from among his slaves.¹³

C. THE AMERICAN INDIANS

The concern entertained by Mr. Jefferson for the welfare and just treatment of the various Indian tribes becomes appar-

¹² *Life of Jefferson*, vol. 1, pp. 369, 370.

¹³ Smucker's *Life of Jefferson*, p. 296.

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ent as we read his annual messages and other state papers, and note his continued solicitude for them and their rights. The following paragraph, from his sixth annual message, embodies his general sentiments on the subject:

“We continue to receive proofs of the growing attachment of our Indian neighbors, and of their disposition to place all their interests under the patronage of the United States. These dispositions are inspired by their confidence in our justice, and in the sincere concern we feel for their welfare, and as long as we discharge these high and honorable functions with the integrity and good faith which alone can entitle us to their continuance, we may expect to reap the just reward in their peace and friendship.”¹⁴

It is to be regretted that such friendly dispositions on the part of the Indians have not always been compelled by justice and honor on our part.

D. FOREIGNERS

After noting Mr. Jefferson's concern for the welfare of the Indian tribes, we are not surprised that he should have a

¹⁴ *Statesman's Manual*, vol. i, p. 189.

similar solicitude for the oppressed of other lands. The following quotation is made from his first annual message:

“I cannot omit recommending a revision of the laws on the subject of naturalization. Considering the ordinary chances of human life, a denial of citizenship under a residence of fourteen years is a denial to a great proportion of those who ask it, and controls a policy pursued from their first settlement by many of these States, and still believed of consequence to their prosperity. And shall we refuse the unhappy fugitives from distress that hospitality which the savages of the wilderness extended to our fathers arriving in this land? Shall oppressed humanity find no asylum on this globe? The Constitution, indeed, has wisely provided that, for admission to certain offices of important trust, a residence shall be required sufficient to develop character and design. But might not the general character and capabilities of a citizen be safely communicated to everyone manifesting a bona-fide purpose of embarking his life and fortunes permanently with us? With restrictions, perhaps, to guard against the fraudulent usurpation of our flag. . .”¹⁵

¹⁵ *Statesman's Manual*, vol. i, p. 157.

E. THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC

A temperate man himself, Mr. Jefferson felt concerned for the class of men whose weakness for strong drink renders them unfortunate. To what extent, and by what method, he thought legislation might protect the intemperate class, will be apparent from the following extracts from his writings:

“I rejoice, as a moralist, at the prospect of a reduction of the duties on wine, by our National Legislature. It is an error to view a tax on that liquor as merely a tax on the rich. It is a prohibition of its use to the middling class of our citizens, and a condemnation of them to the poison of whisky, which is desolating their houses. No nation is drunken where wine is cheap; and none sober, where the dearness of wine substitutes ardent spirits as the common beverage. It is, in truth, the only antidote to the bane of whisky. Fix but the duty at the rate of other merchandise, and we can drink wine here as cheap as we do grog; and who will not prefer it? Its extended use will carry health and comfort to a much enlarged circle.”¹⁶

¹⁶ To M. de Neuville, *cir.* 1818 -Randall's *Life of Jefferson*, vol. 3, p. 449.

To General Samuel Smith he writes, on May 3, 1823: “. . . One of his [the legislator’s] important duties is as guardian of those who, from causes susceptible of precise definition, cannot take care of themselves. Such are infants, maniacs, gamblers, drunkards. The last, as much as the maniac, requires restrictive measures to save him from the fatal infatuation under which he is destroying his health, his morals, his family, and his usefulness to society. One powerful obstacle to his ruinous self-indulgence would be a price beyond his competence. . . . A tax on whisky is to discourage its consumption; a tax on foreign spirits encourages whisky by removing its rival from competition. The price and present duty throw foreign spirits already out of competition with whisky, and accordingly they are used but to a salutary extent. You see no persons besotting themselves with imported spirits, wines, liquors, cordials, etc. Whisky claims to itself alone the exclusive office of sot-making.”¹⁷

If it were true that whisky “claims to itself alone the exclusive office of sot-making,” and if it were true that nobody

¹⁷ *Works*, vol. vii, p. 285.

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would drink whisky when wine, etc., is as cheap as "grog," then Mr. Jefferson's theory of temperance reform would be very nearly complete. As it is, no one can condemn it wholly. Perhaps, after all, it is about as effective as any legal restriction can be; and perhaps, in Mr. Jefferson's day, it was even more feasible than at the present.

Without stopping further to consider the practicability of Mr. Jefferson's plan, as proposed above, or to search for a better one, I will adduce one more quotation on the subject under discussion, this one from a special message of January 28, 1803:

"These people [certain Indian tribes] are becoming very sensible of the baneful effects produced on their morals, their health, and existence, by the abuse of ardent spirits, and some of them earnestly desire a prohibition of that article from being carried among them. The legislature will consider whether the effectuating that desire would not be in the spirit of benevolence and liberality which they have hitherto practiced toward these our neighbors, and which has had so happy an effect toward conciliating their friendship. It

has been found, too, in experience, that the same abuse gives frequent rise to incidents tending much to commit our peace with the Indians." ¹⁸

Since Mr. Jefferson recognized that it is a duty of the legislator to guard the drunkard, as well as the maniac; that the distribution of liquor among savages gives frequent rise to trouble; and that withholding from them ardent spirits might be the part of benevolence and liberality, we can scarcely help but wonder whether he ever reflected upon the advisability of trying the same policy with civilized men. However this may be, we cannot help wishing that when our people embarked upon their recent civilizing (?) projects they would have followed, a little more closely, in their dealings with Asiatic savages (?), the policy recommended by Mr. Jefferson for dealings with the savages of North America.

F. CIVIL SERVICE

It has already been noted under previous heads that Mr. Jefferson advocated a simple system of administration, believing that the number of officials both at home

¹⁸ *Statesman's Manual*, vol. i, p. 169.

and abroad should be reduced to the smallest number consistent with efficient service. When he entered upon office as President he had a problem to meet, with respect to the distribution of minor offices, that had not confronted either of his predecessors. Most of the men he found holding positions under presidential appointment were those who had been appointed by General Washington. These persons, on Mr. Adams' election, being either Federalists or men that had never strongly avowed party connection one way or the other, of course gave Mr. Adams no ground for their removal, and so were continued in office during his administration. In Mr. Jefferson's case, however, the conditions were different. He could not consistently and effectively carry out his plan of government if a large majority of important positions were held by men antagonistic to his principles. On the other hand, he could not remove many of the Federalists from office without arousing the general opposition of that party, thereby alienating the support that many of them otherwise were disposed to give to his administration. In the dilemma he endeavored to pursue a middle course—he removed

some who were violent partisans, some who were appointed literally on the eve of his inauguration, and some who were disqualified for the efficient discharge of their duties—in all but a comparatively small number. But notwithstanding his discretion, he was assailed by both parties—by the Federalists, as having instituted a “spoils” system; by the Republicans, as having yielded too much to the Federalists. But although his opponents accuse him of originating the doctrine, “To the victors belong the spoils,” they at the same time are forced to acknowledge his moderation. “It is due him to say that, although he confined his appointments to office to his political friends, as did generally his successors, Presidents Madison and Monroe, his removals of political opponents from office, during the eight years of his administration, were but few in number, compared with those of more recent administrations.”¹⁹

On the whole, therefore, it seems evident that Mr. Jefferson based his choice of men for office upon their fitness for efficient service, rather than upon party distinctions. “I have never removed a man,”

¹⁹ *Statesman's Manual*, vol. i, p. 221.

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says he, "merely because he was a Federalist: I have never wished them to give a vote at an election, but according to their own wishes. But as no government could discharge its duties to the best advantage of its citizens, if its agents were in a regular course of thwarting instead of executing all its measures, and were employing the patronage and influence of their offices against the government and its measures, I have only requested they would be quiet, and they should be safe; that if their conscience urges them to take an active and zealous part in opposition, it ought also to urge them to retire from a post which they could not conscientiously conduct with fidelity to the trust reposed in them; and on failure to retire, I have removed them; that is to say, those who maintained an active and zealous opposition to the government." ²⁰

G. MONEY AND BANKS

By the limitation of its charter, the United States Bank had expired in 1811. Very soon after its friends in Congress began earnestly to urge its reëstablishment, on the ground that the want of it

²⁰ To John Page, July 17, 1807.—*Works*, vol. v, p. 136.

mainly led to the distressing derangement prevailing in monetary affairs. Some of the earlier Republican opponents of the bank had begun to yield to these views; but Mr. Jefferson maintained his uncompromising hostility. His general plan was to propose, as a substitute for the bank, the issuance of Treasury bills, "emitted on a specific tax appropriated for their redemption." He pronounced the system of State banks, as then organized, unsubstantial and fraudulent—"productive of evil at best, and always ready to explode and carry ruin throughout the community." He regarded State banks as convenient, and even necessary, perhaps, for the accommodation of business men, but thought they should offer nothing but cash in exchange for discounted bills.²¹ On September 10, 1814, when the banks suspended specie payment, he wrote to Thomas Cooper: "The crisis, then, of the abuses of banking is arrived. . . . Between two and three hundred millions of dollars of their promissory notes are in the hands of the people, for solid produce and property sold, and they formally declare they will not pay them. This is an

²¹ Randall's *Life of Jefferson*, vol. 3, pp. 386, 387.

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act of bankruptcy, of course, and will be so pronounced by any court before which it shall be brought. . . . A fearful tax! if equalized on all; but overwhelming and convulsive by its partial fall. . . . From the establishment of the United States Bank, to this day, I have preached against this system, but have been sensible no cure could be hoped but in the catastrophe now happening. . . . We are now without any medium; and necessity, as well as patriotism and confidence, will make us all eager to receive treasury notes, if founded on specific taxes. Congress may now borrow of the public, and without interest, all the money they may want, to the amount of a competent circulation, by merely issuing their own promissory notes, of proper denominations, for the larger purposes of circulation, but not for the small. Leave that door open for the entrance of metallic money. . . .”²²

H. RIGHTS OF THE MINORITY

While Mr. Jefferson continually insisted that it is the duty of every citizen to acquiesce in the decision of the majority, he at the same time recognized that the

²² Randall's *Life of Jefferson*, vol. 3, pp. 402, 403.

minority have rights that the majority are bound to respect. This is a truth that should always be remembered. There are always many souls in every commonwealth that have no voice in the government, however democratic the system may be. Because women and children may have no vote, and therefore exercise no active power in the State, is no reason why the laws should ignore their interests. Likewise, when one political party has been defeated, its interests, or at least the individual rights of those composing it, should not be held as forfeited to the party in power, but the hand of justice should protect the privileges of vanquished as well as victors.

"All . . . will bear in mind this sacred principle," says Mr. Jefferson, in his first inaugural address, "that though the will of the majority is in all cases to prevail, that will, to be rightful, must be reasonable; that the minority possess their equal rights, which equal laws must protect, and to violate which would be oppression. Let us, then, fellow-citizens, unite with one heart and one mind. Let us restore to social intercourse that harmony and affection without which liberty and

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even life itself are but dreary things. And let us reflect that having banished from our land that religious intolerance under which mankind so long bled and suffered, we have yet gained little if we countenance a political intolerance as despotic, as wicked, and capable of as bitter and bloody persecutions.”

I. EXPANSION OF TERRITORY

Mr. Jefferson favored expansion of territory, to a certain extent; for, besides his natural desire for healthy national growth, he believed that the government of a large country is apt to be safer and freer from corrupting influences than the government of a small district. The great empire of Louisiana was his purchase. He regarded Texas and the Floridas as naturally falling to our right.²³ “I have ever looked on Cuba,” he says, “as the most interesting addition which could ever be made to our system of States. The control which, with Florida Point, this island would give us over the Gulf of Mexico, and the countries and isthmus bordering on it, as well as all those whose waters flow into it, would fill up the measure of our political well-

²³ Randall's *Life of Jefferson*, vol. 3, pp. 471, 472.

being.”²⁴ Possibly, then, he would have favored the acquisition of the nearer South American states and a portion, or all, of Canada. Possibly he would, I say. If Canada and such of the South American states as could combine with intelligence their citizens with ours would have manifested a disposition to enter our Union, I believe Mr. Jefferson would have been one to consider the proposition favorably. But would he have compelled them by force of arms to partake of our liberties? I trow not. Would he then have sought territory by conquest on the opposite side of the globe? To ask this question is, it seems to me, to answer it; for much as he desired Cuba, right at our doors, he did not want it at the “expense of war and enmity.”²⁵ But if anyone is still disposed, as some have seemed to be, to justify the present expansive policy of the United States by pointing to the expansive policy of Jefferson, let them proceed to reconcile the principle of standing armies with the principle of no standing army, and the principle of governmental despotism with governmental liberty; and if these principles seem reconcilable and

²⁴ *Works*, vol. vii, p. 317.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

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reconciled, then let them consider the following declarations:

"From many conversations with him [M. Corres, appointed minister to Brazil by the Government of Portugal], I hope he sees, and will promote in his new situation, the advantages of a cordial fraternization among all the American nations, and the importance of their coalescing in an American system of policy, totally independent of and unconnected with that of Europe. The day is not distant when we may formally require a meridian of partition through the ocean which separates the two hemispheres, on the hither side of which no European gun shall ever be heard, nor an American on the other; and when, during the rage of the eternal wars of Europe, the lion and the lamb, within our regions, shall lie down together in peace."²⁶

"Our first and fundamental maxim should be, never to entangle ourselves in the broils of Europe. [But of Asia?] Our second, never to suffer Europe to intermeddle with cis-Atlantic affairs."²⁷

²⁶ To William Short, August 4, 1820.—Randall's *Life of Jefferson*, vol. iii, p. 472.

²⁷ To President Monroe, October 24, 1823.—*Works*, vol. vii, p. 315.

J. PROVIDENCE IN POLITICS

Some men have counted Mr. Jefferson an atheist. Now, whatever he was, that he was not. However we may question his orthodoxy, we cannot question his belief in an Almighty and All-Wise Providence, —unless we question his sincerity. That he regarded the All-Wise as being concerned in the welfare and progress of men and nations, and that he desired to encourage a becoming reverence for Him, is apparent in all his more formal state papers. The following paragraph, quoted from Mr. Jefferson's second inaugural address, will serve to illustrate the point in question:

"I shall need, too, the favor of that Being in whose hands we are, who led our forefathers, as Israel of old, from their native land, and planted them in a country flowing with all the necessities and comforts of life; who has covered our infancy with His providence, and our riper years with His wisdom and power; and to whose goodness I ask you to join with me in supplications that He will so enlighten the minds of your servants, guide their councils, and prosper their measures, that what-

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soever they do, shall result in your good, and shall secure to you the peace, friendship, and approbation of all nations.”²⁸

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Jefferson was not only a political scientist; he was also a practical statesman. He served his own age well, but succeeding ages better; for while he was, perhaps, a step in advance of his own generation, he was building also for their children. He stood for freedom of action, freedom of conscience, freedom of intellect. The American apostle of human rights and human liberties, he reinaugurated the American crusade against ignorance, seeking to implant knowledge and virtue in each individual as the “true basis of the state, and as the best safeguard for the right exercise of liberty.”

²⁸ *Statesman's Manual*, vol. i, p. 176.



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